

## HOUSE RESOLUTION 263

By Todd

A RESOLUTION urging Congress to reauthorize forensic DNA grants.

WHEREAS, DNA technology is increasingly vital to ensuring accuracy and fairness in the criminal justice system, but it is not yet considered a routine tool for criminal identification by law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, over fifty thousand (50,000) law enforcement investigations have already been aided nationwide because of DNA matches made through the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), bringing justice to victims and removing criminals from the streets; and

WHEREAS, the Innocence Project has used DNA in over two hundred (200) cases to exonerate persons who were wrongly convicted of crimes; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee and other states throughout the nation have significantly expanded their DNA programs to include a growing number of convicted and/or arrested felons to match against unsolved crimes; and

WHEREAS, the demand for DNA testing in both violent and non-violent crimes has continued to increase as the reliability of this evidence is proven; and

WHEREAS, many laboratories still maintain DNA backlogs of six (6) months or longer and are unable to meet the growing demand for DNA testing despite funding commitments from state and local governments; and

WHEREAS, the Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant program, which was funded as part of the federal Justice for All Act of 2004, has given state and local governments an opportunity to begin to maximize the full potential of forensic DNA through backlog reduction, but much work remains to be done; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that this General Assembly

hereby urges the Congress of the United States to act expeditiously to reauthorize the Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant program at current or increased levels.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this General Assembly strongly urges each member of the United States Congress from Tennessee to utilize the full measure of his or her influence to affect the reauthorization of such forensic DNA grants.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President and the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation.